

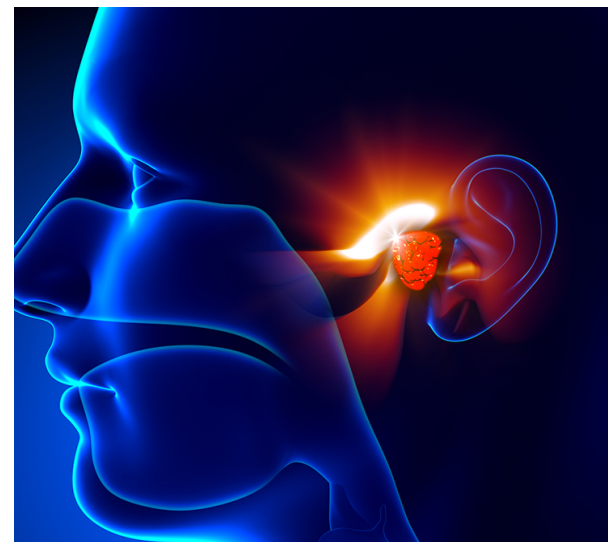
Hearing Loss Awareness Month

Important Facts and Tips on Staying Connected

May 2020

Implications of Hearing Loss

- In NC, over 1.2 million people ages 18 and older have hearing loss (about 16.2% of the population).
- Falling risk is increased 3x with mild hearing loss.
- Dementia onset increased 2x with mild hearing loss.
- Research shows those already with health conditions of cardiovascular disease, diabetes or chronic kidney disease are at a higher risk for hearing loss.



How to Maintain Hearing Health

- Please ask your doctor to schedule a professional hearing exam when you are:
 - Over age of 50
 - Have a health condition that increases your risk for hearing loss
- Some medications can cause hearing loss:
 - [Ototoxic medication](#)
 - [List of ototoxic medication](#)
- Reduce your risk of noise-induced hearing loss:
 - Limit exposure to loud noise and music
 - If unavoidable, wear hearing protection
- With untreated hearing loss, isolation can lead to reduced speech comprehension.



Tips for Avoiding Social Isolation

- Use hearing assistive technology to hear better:
 - Bluetooth phone streamers
 - Telecoil neckloops
 - Amplified telephone or headset with your hearing aids/cochlear implant
- Use video calls to communicate with friends & family. A large screen can make visual communication cues more accessible:
 - Speech reading
 - Facial expressions
 - Body language
- Explore visual and text-based ways to connect with people:
 - Online classes
 - Social media
 - Book clubs
 - Virtual dinners
 - Games



Hearing Loss Friendly Video Communication

Communication is vital for staying connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some tips to improve video communication:

- For clear video and sound it is best to use an HD camera and cables for the network/device connections or 5 GHz Wi-Fi.
- Adjust lighting to make sure the picture is clear and use a plain, contrasting background. This helps everyone see each other better.
- Use a good acoustical setting & encourage participants to use a headset or hearing assistive technology.
- Set communication rules in advance.
 - Mute microphone when you are not speaking
 - Use Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)
 - Limit distractions
 - Take turns
 - Procedures for addressing communication issues



Hearing Loss Resources

- For additional information & services regarding hearing loss, contact your local [DSDHH regional center](#)
- HLAA hearing loss resources related to COVID-19:
www.hearingloss.org/coronavirus-covid-19-resources
- DSDHH hearing loss resources related to COVID-19:
www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/services-deaf-and-hard-hearing/covid-19-hearing-loss-resources
- Hearing Loss Association of America Webinars:
www.hearingloss.org/programs-events/webinars/schedule-recordings

